

stamps. It was revolutionary and it helped to dramatically reduce extreme poverty and extreme hunger in the United States.

Since the 1970s, Congress has worked to strengthen the program, making it even more effective and efficient. We have modernized benefit processing, and replaced the paper food stamps with EBT cards. We have added incentives for the purchase of healthy foods, and improved access to fresh fruits and vegetables. We have updated benefit calculations to exclude combat pay for military families, and allow childcare deductions to assist families with young children.

In 2008, we renamed the program SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The modern SNAP provides millions of children, seniors, and other vulnerable adults with food assistance each year. It helps families lift themselves out of poverty, and improves health, educational, and economic outcomes for its recipients.

As I hear from families in my district, I learn how powerful SNAP is in transforming lives. Just last week I heard the story of a graduate school-educated constituent who became disabled and was unable to work and was resistant to applying for SNAP. She didn't think she fit the profile of someone who needed food benefits, but she did. She applied for and received benefits, and now she no longer panics about where her next meal is going to come from.

□ 1215

This constituent wanted us to know that people who use SNAP are not lazy. She said: "SNAP helps people at least not to have to worry as much about going to bed, school, or work hungry."

Another constituent shared that she and her husband rely on SNAP to eat healthier meals. Prior to receiving benefits, they had peanut butter and jelly for almost every meal. Now, with modest assistance, they are able to buy fruits and vegetables. While they still continue to struggle, they are able to enjoy more nutritious meals, and they have seen an improvement in their health.

These are just a few stories of how important it is to maintain—and increase—these lifesaving food benefits. Still, as 42 million Americans continue to struggle with hunger and food insecurity, more needs to be done.

In preparation for the 2018 farm bill, the House Agriculture Committee has conducted a thorough review of the program. We have held 23 hearings and received testimony from dozens of expert witnesses—both liberal and conservative—who all agree that the program is working.

Based on this testimony, we have learned that there is no reason whatsoever to undermine the program through structural changes, block grants, further restrictions, more onerous requirements, or cuts, as some of my House colleagues have proposed.

Instead, we should be focused on making the program even better. We need to make sure that anyone who needs modest food assistance benefits has access to them. We need to support and expand innovative programs that help to increase the purchasing power of SNAP, and we need to increase SNAP benefits which currently average a mere \$1.40 per person, per meal, in order to provide families on the program with access to more nutritious food that will last them through the month.

Mr. Speaker, SNAP works. It is our Nation's first line of defense against hunger and one of the most important tools we have to help lift our neighbors out of poverty.

In the spirit of Senators McGovern and Dole, it is time for Congress to renew their bipartisan commitment to ending hunger in this country once and for all. As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the landmark Food Stamp Act of 1977, I urge my colleagues to join me in strengthening SNAP and working to end hunger now.

FIRST PRINCIPLES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, on the question of race, we clearly have come a long way in America, but we still have a long way to go.

There are some in this country who want to sugarcoat the African-American experience in the great United States of America, but the facts are the facts. In this country, the African-American community has been forced to endure slavery, rape, kidnapping, lynchings, Jim Crow, segregation, mass incarceration, and a police brutality epidemic that continues to this very day. It was in this context that athletes like Colin Kaepernick bravely chose to kneel down so that others may have the courage to stand up.

There are some who have criticized these athletes as unpatriotic, but their actions are uniquely American. Liberty and justice for all is an American value. Equal protection under the law is an American value. Freedom of speech and expression as embedded in the First Amendment is an American value.

Yet there is criticism coming even from folks in the White House. I find this ironic because this is the same group of people at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue who regularly refuse to criticize Vladimir Putin and defend Russia's interference with our election, undermining American democracy for the first time in our Nation's history.

How dare you lecture us about what is patriotic.

So I just came to the House floor to make it clear to all of the athletes across this great country who have chosen to stand up and confront injustice in our society that there are Members of the United States Congress who have your back.

Steph Curry, we have your back.

LeBron James, we have your back.

Coach Mike Tomlin, we have your back.

You stand on the shoulders of giants like Joe Louis, Wilma Rudolph, Jackie Robinson, Jim Brown, Bill Russell, Muhammad Ali, and so many others who throughout the annals of time chose to confront injustice in America to make us a better place.

Now you have taken the baton, and, thankfully, you are doing the same exact thing. We should be grateful.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Dear Lord, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We come to You as a nation in the midst of significant, imminent transition, even as important disagreements on policy promise vigorous debate in the days to come.

As people look for causes and solutions, the temptation is great to seek ideological position. We ask that You might send Your spirit of peace and reconciliation, that instead of ascendancy over opponents, the Members of this people's House and all elected to represent our Nation might work together, humbly, recognizing the best in each other's hopes to bring stability and direction toward a strong future.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PITTENGER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PITTENGER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows: